

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 1  
RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

## MEF bantah FOMEMA naikkan yuran, periksa kesihatan pekerja asing setiap tahun

Oleh Suraya Ali  
suraya.ali@bh.com.my

**Kuala Lumpur:** Persekutuan Majikan-Majikan Malaysia (MEF) membantah keputusan Agensi Pemantauan dan Pemeriksaan Perubatan Pekerja Asing (FOMEMA) menaikkan kadar yuran dan kekerapan pemeriksaan kesihatan untuk pekerja asing di negara ini.

Mendakwa ketetapan itu dibu-

at tanpa sebarang perbincangan dengan pihak berkepentingan, Presiden MEF, Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman, sekali gus mahu peraturan baharu itu digantung terlebih dahulu.

Katanya, majikan yang menggajikan pekerja asing dianggarkan perlu menanggung kos RM414 juta setahun susulan keputusan berkenaan, mengambil kira anggaran sekitar dua juta pekerja asing yang ada di negara ini

dengan kenaikan kadar yuran kepada antara 10 hingga 14 peratus.

Untuk rekod, caj pemeriksaan perubatan pekerja asing dikenakan FOMEMA sebelum ini ialah RM190 untuk lelaki dan RM207 bagi wanita, meliputi saringan HIV, Hepatitis B, sifilis dan kehamilan, termasuk penggunaan opiat dan kanabis.

Nasional 4

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 4  
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

# Kerajaan perlu bincang kenaikan yuran, pemeriksaan perubatan

**Dari Muka 1**

Berkuat kuasa 16 Disember lalu, kadar baharu adalah RM207 untuk lelaki dan RM217 bagi wanita dan diperluaskan lagi kepada tiga kategori pemeriksaan, iaitu filariasis (cacing gelang), Hepatitis C dan methamphetamine, termasuk bagi pekerja asing baru tiba dan mahu perbaharui prosedur proses pekerjaan.

Syed Hussain berkata, majikan hanya tahu mengenai kenaikan yuran dan kekerapan pemeriksaan perubatan pekerja asing selepas melayari laman web Fomema Sdn Bhd, syarikat yang diberi lesen untuk menjalankan pemeriksaan kesihatan

pekerja asing di negara ini.

Sehubungan itu, beliau berkata, MEF menggesa kerajaan mengambil tindakan serta berbincang dengan pihak berkepentingan mengenai kenaikan yuran dan kekerapan pemeriksaan perubatan seperti diumumkan FOMEMA itu.

"FOMEMA mengumumkan berkuat kuasa 16 Disember 2023, pekerja asing perlu melakukan pemeriksaan perubatan setiap tahun dan juga menaikkan harga pemeriksaan itu.

"Sebelumnya, pekerja asing perlu buat pemeriksaan kesihatan setiap tiga tahun secara berterusan dan tak perlu buat sebarang pemeriksaan kesihatan sehingga tujuh tahun kemudian.

Ia kemudian ditukar kepada setiap dua tahun dan kini FOMEMA menukarnya kepada setiap tahun," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Berikutan perubahan itu, beliau berkata, ia bermakna pekerja asing perlu melakukan pemeriksaan perubatan setiap tahun.

"FOMEMA juga menaikkan yuran antara 10 hingga 14 peratus. Dengan anggaran dua juta pekerja asing di negara ini, majikan perlu menanggung kira-kira RM414 juta setahun untuk pemeriksaan perubatan pekerja asing," katanya.

Katanya lagi, sehingga kini tiada sebarang pengumuman rasmi dikeluarkan kerajaan ber-

kait perkara terbabit, sebaliknya kenaikan yuran dan kekerapan pemeriksaan kesihatan pekerja asing itu diumumkan Fomema Sdn Bhd.

FOMEMA dilantik mengendalikan perkhidmatan pemeriksaan kesihatan peringkat saringan untuk pekerja asing yang menetap dan bekerja di Malaysia dalam usaha mencegah penyebaran penyakit berjangkit.

Sehingga 2020, ia dilapor mempunyai lebih 4,000 klinik panel dan pusat serta makmal perubatan dan pusat X-ray bagi menjalankan pemeriksaan fizikal, pemeriksaan X-ray dan ujian makmal untuk memudahkan pekerja asing membuat pemeriksaan perubatan masing-masing.

Sehingga kini tiada sebarang pengumuman rasmi dikeluarkan kerajaan berkaitan perkara terbabit, sebaliknya kenaikan yuran dan kekerapan pemeriksaan kesihatan pekerja asing itu diumumkan Fomema Sdn Bhd



Syed Hussain  
Syed Husman,  
Presiden MEF

AKHBAR : KOSMO  
MUKA SURAT : 14  
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Sanggup cederakan diri selepas tidak tahan dikecam pengguna media sosial

## Sakit mental angkara pembuli siber

Oleh HUMAIRA KAHHAR

**PETALING JAYA** – Tekanan emosi dan trauma berpanjangan sehingga sanggup mencederakan diri antara kesan negatif yang terpaksa ditempuh segelintir pengguna media sosial yang menjadi mangsa kepada buli siber.

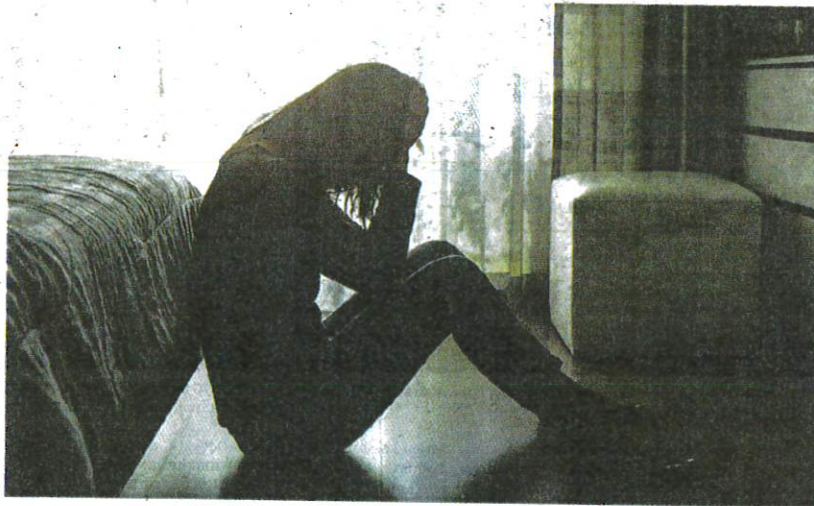
Lebih membimbangkan apabila ada antara mereka yang terpaksa bergantung kepada ubat selain mendapatkan rawatan doktor selepas disahkan menghidap penyakit mental.

Seorang wanita dikenali sebagai Syahirah, 22, berkata, kisah malangnya bermula apabila dia tersilap memberi komen pada hantaran yang dimuat naik rakan-rakannya mengenai satu isu kekeluan.

"Hantaran itu sebenarnya memperlekehkan trauma dihadapi rakan kami yang lain. Keadaan makin buruk apabila saya pula dikecam hebat pengguna laman sosial selain dipulaukan oleh rakan-rakan.

"Kejadian tersebut berlaku pada pertengahan tahun ini sehingga saya tidak boleh tidur seminggu," katanya kepada Kosmo baru-baru ini.

Syahirah yang juga penuntut kolej berkata, walaupun dia telah membuat permohonan maaf secara terbuka mengenai insiden itu, namun kecaman tidak per-



RAMAI mangsa buli siber terpaksa melalui kehidupan sukar sehingga menjejaskan kesihatan termasuk disahkan mengalami masalah mental. – GAMBAR HIASAN

nah berhenti.

"Paling teruk apabila saya mencederakan diri sendiri sehinggalah saya disahkan menghidap kemurungan," jelasnya.

Berdasarkan Portal MyHealth Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), buli siber adalah satu perbuatan mengancam, memalukan atau menakutkan seseorang me-

lalui medium elektronik seperti mesej teks (SMS), chatting, e-mel, laman web sosial, telefon bimbit atau permainan internet.

Dalam pada itu, seorang lagi mangsa buli dikenali Hidayah, 22, berkata, tindakannya yang gemar memuat naik gambar dan nyanyian menyebabkan ada individu tidak berpuas hati dan sanggup

menghinanya secara terbuka.

"Saya berasa kecil dan takut untuk berkomunikasi dengan sesiapa sahaja. Bila saya menutup aplikasi X, mereka ganggu pula rakan-rakan lain dengan tujuan untuk memalukan saya.

"Kejadian ini membuatkan saya trauma kerana bait-bait perkataan yang mereka lontarkan

kepada saya sangat teruk seperti perkataan 'sampah', ujarnya.

Bagi Najwa, 20, pula, trauma yang dialami bermula apabila salah seorang pengikut di Instagram menghantar gambar dengan pesanan berbau lucah untuk mengajak hubungan intim dengannya.

"Dia menghantar pesanan kepada saya hampir setiap hari selama dua minggu dan walaupun saya menyekat akaun tersebut, dia masih nekad dengan membuka akaun baru.

"Selepas saya bercerita mengenai hal ini kepada orang sekeliling, keadaan makin teruk apabila saya pula yang dituduh bersikap miang.

"Setakat ini, tiada sesiapa yang membantu dan saya makin sukar untuk percayakan orang lain," luahnya.

Situasi sama turut dialami seorang wanita, Maya, 29, apabila dia mendakwa pernah menerima ugutan bunuh hanya kerana pendapatnya tidak disukai oleh pihak lain.

Katanya, kejadian berlaku apabila dia memuat naik pendapat mengenai seorang artis sehingga ada pihak lain tidak berpuas hati dan mula mengecamnya.

"Ketika itu saya agak cemas dan segala butiran diri termasuk tempat saya bekerja juga dibongkar," ujarnya.

## 'Pembuli tiada keyakinan diri, suka jatuhkan orang lain'

**PETALING JAYA** – Peribadi pembuli siber sering dikaitkan dengan sikap seseorang yang kurang berkeyakinan diri dan membuli semata-mata untuk menjatuhkan maruah orang lain.

Selain itu, ada juga pembuli yang berselindung di sebalik nama 'Anonymous' untuk mereka lebih bermotivasi dalam melakukan buli siber di media sosial.

Pakar Perunding Psikiatrik dan Presiden Persatuan Kesihatan Mental Malaysia (MMHA), Prof. Datuk Dr. Andrew Mohanraj berkata, ada beberapa faktor yang mungkin dikaitkan dengan tindakan seseorang sehingga menjadi pembuli siber.

"Persekitaran di media sosial ini membolehkan individu menyembunyi di sebalik nama skrin atau profil berbeza. Anonimiti atau Anonymous ini boleh menyebabkan pembuli berkelakuan dalam gaya yang berlainan berbanding dengan cara mereka dalam interaksi bersemuka," katanya.

Menurut Andrew, sesetengah individu juga mungkin kurang



ANDREW MOHANRAJ

empati dan mengalami kesukaran untuk memahami atau mempertimbangkan kesan tindakan terhadap orang lain.

"Sifat komunikasi dalam talian boleh mengurangkan kepekaan individu terhadap akibat sebenarnya tindakan mereka. Ini juga mungkin menyumbang kepada tingkah laku yang lebih agresif atau berbahaya.

"Dalam sesetengah keadaan, individu mungkin terlibat dalam buli siber kerana mereka menyaksikan orang lain berbuat demikian, yang membawa kepada

satu bentuk tingkah laku peniru atau 'copycat'," jelasnya.

Tambahnya lagi, dalam kes tertentu, buli siber mungkin merupakan manifestasi ciri-ciri sosial yang lebih luas.

"Keinginan untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan kumpulan tertentu atau untuk mendapat pengiktirafan dalam komuniti mungkin menyebabkan individu terlibat dalam tingkah laku buli.

"Malangnya, sesetengah individu memperoleh kepuasan atau keseronokan daripada menyebabkan kemudaratan kepada orang lain. Buli siber, dalam kes ini, mungkin dianggap sebagai satu bentuk hiburan atau cara untuk meluangkan masa," ujarnya.

Mengikut rekod, Persatuan Kesihatan Mental Malaysia menerima sehingga 1,000 panggilan kecemasan sebulan berkenaan masalah buli yang juga berkait dengan tekanan, kebimbangan dan kemurungan dan juga pemikiran untuk membunuh diri dalam beberapa kes dengan 20 peratus daripadanya adalah panggilan berkaitan buli siber.



PEMBULI siber sering berselindung di sebalik nama Anonymous untuk mengelak identiti mereka terbongkar.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 10  
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

# Rakyat Malaysia tak berhemah, bazir guna air

Penggunaan lebih 80 liter sehari per kapita setiap orang

Oleh MUKHRIZ MAT HUSIN  
SHAH ALAM

**M**asyarakat Malaysia menggunakan air secara purata sebanyak 240 liter seorang sehari. Ini jauh melebihi sasaran ditetapkan Rancangan Malaysia Ke-11 (RMK11) dan RMK12, iaitu 180 liter.

Lebih menyedihkan trend penggunaan air tersebut semakin meningkat sebagaimana laporan tahunan Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara (SPAN).

Pakar air yang juga bekas Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Alam Sekitar dan Air (KASA), Datuk Seri Dr Ir Zaini Ujang berkata, sasaran berkenaan tidak akan tercapai sekiranya trend penggunaan air tidak dapat diubah menerusi perubahan faktor-faktor kemanusiaan, teknologi dan kewangan.

"Penggunaan air yang dianjurkan di peringkat antarabangsa oleh pelbagai agensi, termasuk Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) adalah 160 liter seorang sehari. Jadi kita 'membazir' kira-kira 80 liter!" tegasnya.

Ujarnya, pertambahan 80 liter ini menyebabkan peningkatan keperluan sumber air dari sungai dan bawah tanah, pertambahan saiz fasiliti bekalan air dan sistem pembedahan.



Pakar berpandangan terdapat tiga kaedah yang boleh digunakan untuk menjimatkan air iaitu dengan ubah tabiat, teknologi dan tarif air.

"Perlu juga disebutkan bahawa SPAN hanya untuk pengguna air di Semenanjung, tidak termasuk Sabah dan Sarawak," katanya kepada *Sinar Harian* pada Khamis.

Ujar Zaini, penggunaan air secara berlebihan ini sukar dibendung dalam aktiviti-aktiviti harian seperti mandi, mengambil wuduk, dan penyediaan makanan.

"Ada yang suka mandi lama, lebih 10 minit. Kedua, ada yang biasa mandi sehingga tiga kali sehari.

"Secara purata kita menggunakan tiga liter air seminit ketika mandi dengan pancutan air deras.

"Kalau mandi 10 minit, bermakna 30 liter air digunakan setiap kali mandi. Kalau tiga kali mandi, kita guna 90 liter air sehari. Ini tidak termasuk air yang digunakan untuk berus gigi, cuci muka dan pam tandas," ujarnya.

Tambahnya, berdasarkan kajian

yang dibuat, secara purata kita menggunakan antara tiga hingga 10 liter air setiap kali mengambil wuduk.

Ulasnya, sedangkan dalam hadis sahih riwayat Bukhari dan Muslim telah menyatakan bahawa Nabi Muhammad SAW hanya mengambil wuduk dengan satu cupak air bersamaan 0.7 liter sahaja. Dan mandi dengan satu gantang air, atau empat hingga lima cupak air, bersamaan 2.8 hingga 3.5 liter air sahaja.

Jelasnya, tiga kaedah untuk menjimatkan penggunaan air domestik, iaitu melalui perubahan tabiat, teknologi dan tarif air.

"Sikap jimat air perlu dipelajari, dipupuk dan diamalkan.

"Selain itu, teknologi jimat air perlu diguna pakai misalnya gajet jimat air seperti yang dianjurkan oleh SPAN.

"Kita juga boleh mengguna pakai sistem sensor untuk mengambil wuduk di masjid atau sensor pada paip di sinki. Sensor ini akan mengawal penggunaan air," jelasnya.



ZAINI

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 16  
RUANGAN : CETUSAN

## Lepas Covid, Penyakit X pula

**BAGI** individu yang terkesan dengan pandemik Covid-19 sebelum ini seperti pernah melalui pengalaman sesak nafas hingga diintubasi di wad ICU, kehilangan orang tersayang, hilang pekerjaan dan sebagainya pasti berasa gusar dengan kenyataan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) mengenai ancaman penyakit baharu yang dinamakan Penyakit X.

Seperti dilaporkan, Ketua Pengarah WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus menyeru semua negara di dunia untuk bersedia menghadapi Penyakit X yang lebih berbahaya daripada Covid. WHO menggunakan istilah Penyakit X untuk penyakit yang tidak diketahui.

Selain itu, Tedros turut menyenaraikan bidang seperti perancangan kesediaan dan infrastruktur penjagaan kesihatan yang boleh disediakan walaupun pengetahuan tentang Penyakit X masih belum lengkap.

Beliau juga menekankan kepentingan melabur dalam penjagaan kesihatan primer dan persediaan menghadapi wabak seperti itu.

Bagi pihak kerajaan, mereka sudah pasti bersedia dari sudut fasiliti kesihatan, pelan kontingensi dan teknologi berkaitan memandangkan pandemik yang dihadapi sebelum ini sudah memberikan pengalaman bagaimana menguruskan penyakit yang tidak terjangka itu.

Bagi rakyat marhaen, kita hanya mampu mengikut apa sahaja dasar yang ditetapkan kerajaan memandangkan kemampuan yang terhad seiring status kita sebagai rakyat biasa.

Kita juga tidak mampu untuk membina kubu bawah tanah untuk mengasingkan diri tatkala kehadiran musibah seperti Covid memandangkan kewangan golongan bawahan sentiasa terhad dari segala sudut.

Jadi apa persediaan yang rakyat biasa boleh lakukan untuk mengharungi penyakit dan wabak yang lebih mencabar pada masa depan?

Jawapannya sudah pasti ada pada batang tubuh kita sendiri iaitu secara bersungguh-sungguh sayang pada diri sendiri dengan menjaga kesihatan.

Walaupun ada yang pandang enteng setiap kali nasihat itu dilontarkan, namun ia amat berguna ketika berhadapan dengan situasi pandemik. Badan yang sihat dapat mengurangkan risiko daripada mengalami kesan yang teruk.

Maka, jagalah pemakanan, lakukan senaman dan aktiviti sihat serta pemeriksaan kesihatan berkala kerana ia juga untuk kebaikan diri sendiri.

Selebihnya kita serahkan kepada ALLAH SWT, Tuhan sekalian alam kerana semuanya atas kehendak-Nya.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 26  
RUANGAN : NEGERI

## Perak rekod 1,089 kes Covid-19 dalam tempoh dua minggu

**IPOH** - Negeri Perak merekodkan 1,089 kes Covid-19 dalam tempoh dua minggu pertama tahun ini.

Menurut Exco Sumber Manusia, Kesihatan, Hal Ehwal Masyarakat India dan Integrasi negeri, A Sivanesan, jumlah itu menunjukkan peningkatan 291.7 peratus berbanding tempoh sama tahun lalu iaitu 278 kes.

Menurutnya, salah satu faktor yang menyumbang kepada peningkatan kes tersebut adalah disebabkan pelaksanaan musim cuti sekolah.

"Begitu pun keadaan masih terkawal dan Jabatan Kesihatan akan terus memantau situasi semasa khususnya memasuki pesakit ke hospital," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian kepada pemberita selepas mempengerusikan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Membanteras Denggi peringkat negeri di Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan di sini pada Khamis.

Sivanesan berkata, kadar penggunaan katil hospital Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia di negeri ini baru mencapai 64 peratus termasuk bagi kes bukan Covid-19, manakala katil unit rawatan rapi (ICU) pula sebanyak 60 peratus.

"Kadar ini adalah mencukupi buat masa ini. Jika bilangan pesakit Covid-19 yang dimasukkan ke wad meningkat dalam masa terdekat, penggunaan katil di wad biasa dan ICU masih tidak terbeban," katanya.

Dalam perkembangan sama, beliau memaklumkan jumlah rakyat negeri ini yang mengambil dos penggalak atau suntikan vaksin Covid-19 yang ketiga dan keempat terlalu rendah.

Katanya, dos pertama merekodkan 80.7 peratus dan dos kedua sebanyak 79.1 peratus.

"Agak menyedihkan apabila suntikan bagi dos penggalak satu hanya merekodkan 46.9 peratus dan 1.7 peratus bagi dos penggalak dua," katanya.

AKHBAR : THE STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 4  
RUANGAN : NATION

Reports by DIYANA PFORDTEN, ILI AQILAH and FATIMAH ZAINAL

# A shortage of psychiatrists

Don: Nation also lacks allied health support but facilities are adequate

**PETALING JAYA:** There are enough mental health facilities in the country to support those in need, but more professionals in the field are needed, say experts.

The stigma that continues to be associated with mental illness and its hospitals also discourages patients from accessing these facilities, they said.

Universiti Malaya Specialist Centre consultant psychiatrist Assoc Prof Dr Amer Siddiq Amer Nordin said the country has public and private mental health facilities that are fairly accessible and affordable to most, if not all, Malaysians.

"In the public sector, we have Mentari, health clinics and also most hospitals have a psychiatrist even in the smallest towns.

"Our NGOs also provide some level of support including counselling services.

"For the private side, we have psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors available," he said.

He said that in terms of medications, Malaysia is among the few countries where there are plenty of options for all types of mental illnesses.

"Some of them are supported by our government. Some coun-

tries like Indonesia, they have limited options for medications, and in others, they do not have enough psychiatrists, with only 10 or so for the whole country."

However, with the increasing number of children in need of mental health support, Dr Amer Siddiq believes there needs to be more specialists and services that cater to this category.

In general, the country is short of psychiatrists.

"We have about 500 psychiatrists in Malaysia and the ratio is not according to what is recommended by the World Health Organisation," he said.

The recommended World Health Organisation ratio is one psychiatrist serving 10,000 people. Malaysia has less than one (0.52) psychiatrist per 100,000 persons.

Dr Amer Siddiq said Malaysia also lacks allied health support such as having sufficient psychologists, especially in public universities.

He said insurance companies need to consider incorporating health coverage for mental illness, while more funding is needed to train mental healthcare providers.

"We also have to continue sup-

porting NGOs to assist in reducing the stigma on mental illness."

Malaysian Mental Health Association president Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj said while the country has acceptable government mental health facilities that cater to both outpatient and inpatient services, it is not the same with the private sector.

"Private mental health clinics that cater to outpatient services are largely concentrated in the Klang Valley and Penang.

"There are only two private hospitals with inpatient facilities for psychiatric patients in the entire country.

"Private hospitals appear to be reluctant to incorporate mental health inpatient services," he said.

Dr Andrew added that this is largely due to limited financial resources in the private sector, with extremely limited private insurance coverage for mental health services in general and inpatient psychiatric services in particular.

"The public is advised to be aware of which public hospital has an inpatient psychiatric facility as this would facilitate admission if needed, rather than being transferred to another hospital

with such facilities in case admission is deemed necessary," he said.

He said general practitioners (GPs) also need to be empowered to examine and treat mental health cases and refer patients to a psychiatrist when needed.

"This will also decrease the burden of specialist psychiatrist services which can then focus on more serious and difficult cases," said Dr Andrew.

Child psychologist Katyana Azman said the stigma associated with mental health hospitals causes many people to avoid such services.

"People are shocked to find how many facilities for mental health we have in the country."

She said mental health facilities need to improve in terms of dissociating themselves from the stigma of a "mental hospital".

"We can start by calling them centres rather than clinics or hospitals, or having independent centres that are not attached to hospitals," said Katyana.

She added that psycho-education should also be improved, such as through outreach programmes to improve the community's awareness.

## Bigger headache for the mentally ill with high cost of medication

**PETALING JAYA:** Mental patients who are already burdened by their illness have another worry - the high cost of psychiatric medication.

What's worse, the prices of these medicines may become even higher.

A lack of insurance coverage for mental health means most of the patients have to pay out of their own pockets, making life more difficult, said Malaysian Psychiatric Association past president Dr Hazli Zakaria.

He said mental illnesses are not given the same priority as other non-communicable diseases like hypertension or diabetes.

"The insurance companies may cover only the assessment or psychotherapy treatment but not the medication.

"The medicines are also expensive due to the different conditions and diagnoses that a patient may have," he said.

Original antipsychotic medication, for example, costs much more than antidepressants, said Dr Hazli.

A monthly dose for original antipsychotic medication can come up to between RM500 and RM800, while antidepressants may cost between RM150 and RM250 per month.

Medications used by patients with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), meanwhile, could cost between RM10 and RM15 daily, said Dr Hazli.

"If someone has both ADHD and depression, they will have to pay for two or three types of medication. If they also have high blood pressure or diabetes, this will further add to their medication costs," he said.

Dr Hazli was commenting on a Reuters report that pharmaceutical companies plan to raise prices of more than 500 drugs in the United States this month.

"It's very unfortunate if the price increase affects psychiatric medications as it will affect our initiative to increase the accessibility of treatment for mental health."

Dr Hazli said any increase in the price of medication would definitely hinder patients from getting optimal treatment as they may not be able to afford it.

He said that while they could seek treatment and medication at government facilities, the waiting list is long and it would further strain the healthcare system. The government would, in turn, need to manage the increase in budgets to public facilities.

"The companies have not informed us yet of any price change but if there is any, prices in Malaysia are likely to follow the global direction and be higher."

## Modern outlook for Hospital Bahagia Ulu Kinta

**IPOH:** Hospital Bahagia Ulu Kinta is seeing increasing numbers in daily outpatient treatments, says its deputy medical director Dr Ahmad Qabil Khalil.

The hospital, Malaysia's largest psychiatric centre, provides about 15,000 outpatient treatments annually, he said.

Based on data from 2019 to September last year, he said the hospital recorded more daily outpatient treatments but a decrease in warded patients.

"We receive about 1,600 warded patients annually and provide about 15,000 outpatient treatments.

"About 55% of the warded cases are due to psychosis, while 25% are drug-related cases and 15% (are emotional cases). However, all the categories have shown a decreasing trend," he told *The Star*.

Located in the heart of Tanjung Rambutan town, the hospital is among the four mental hospitals in the country. Its construction was completed in 1911, making it the oldest psychiatric institution in Malaysia.

Currently, it is taking care of more than 1,000 warded patients.

"Our youngest warded patient is a 16-year-old student who suffers from depression," Dr Ahmad Qabil said.

He said the hospital offers a holistic approach in its treatment of warded patients.

"Our patients, be it warded or outpatient, have various types of illness that require different approaches. We have treatments including medicines, rehabilitation, physical activities and spiritual guidance."

As for those who seek treatment at the specialist clinics at the hospital, he said about 40% are



**Dr Ahmad Qabil:** We receive about 1,600 warded patients annually and provide about 15,000 outpatient treatments. - Photo courtesy of HBUK

suffering from psychosis, 30% are depressed and 10% have anxiety problems. All categories have shown an increasing trend, unlike with the warded patient figures.

"There has also been an increasing number of children and teens coming to the clinics, or about 500 annually. Based on our data, we can see that many of our young patients are diagnosed with neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)."

Dr Ahmad Qabil believes the rising number of those seeking treatment could be due to greater awareness of mental health.

"Years ago, if a four-year-old child had difficulty speaking, the common perception was that the child was slow and lazy. But now, we can see that parents are more aware of their children's development, so they send their children with speech difficulties to specialists and seek treatment.

"As we are a specialist hospital, we get cases recommended by psychiatrists or doctors from

other hospitals. The patients will then be brought to an entry-level ward where they will be monitored for a certain period before they are transferred to another ward based on their condition."

"There are many types and levels when it comes to psychosis. The common term 'crazy' usually refers to a person suffering from psychosis, or having lost the ability to think normally. Among the illnesses under psychosis are schizophrenia, drug influence, and more. Conditions such as bipolar and depression are classified under mood disorder.

"We will monitor the patient's behaviour first. If they show harmful behaviour such as destroying furniture or harming others, they will be warded. For those who show mild symptoms, they will be allowed to return home with prescribed medications and placed under their family's supervision," he added.

There are 86 wards for patients including for the elderly, and the forensic ward, which is for those

ordered by a court to undergo psychiatric evaluation, he said.

Hospital Bahagia Ulu Kinta is located on 202ha of land with much greenery. Besides a museum, there are also farms run by patients under supervision.

"As the hospital opts for a holistic approach, we have a section of the hospital for agro-therapy where patients raise farm animals and plant trees, harvest them, and even sell the produce at our small farmer market and a drink stall located inside the premises," said Dr Ahmad Qabil.

The plants include bananas, eggplant, lemongrass and sugar cane.

"We have ducks and chickens as well. Our patients also take care of the fishing ponds that outsiders can visit with appointments."

He said the patients will be equipped with skills to prepare them once they are discharged.

"We also have a programme where patients are allowed to stay by themselves within the hospital compound while working outside. These patients go out to work as guards, restaurant assistants or cleaning crew. Their condition has improved, which means they can go out and work, but they still need medication from time to time.

"It is important to us that each patient receives holistic care, including prepping them with social skills," he said, adding that the hospital has over 1,500 staff.

Dr Ahmad Qabil said visitors were usually surprised to see the landscape.

"We have universities and school students, even companies, visiting the hospital. They were surprised to see what the hospital looks like," he said.

**FOR MORE:**

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AKHBAR : THE SUN  
MUKA SURAT : 4  
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

## Unhygienic eateries ordered to close

**GEORGE TOWN:** Three food premises here were ordered to close for 14 days after rat droppings were found in a store for raw materials during an operation conducted by the Penang Island City Council.

In a statement, the council said the order for the eateries to shut down until Jan 30 was issued under its Food Establishment By-laws 1991.

"The operation on Wednesday was conducted by 11 officers from the Licensing Department with the assistance of two officers from the Enforcement Department and two officers from the Public Relations Department to ensure food premises on Penang Island adhere to the set cleanliness standards.

"Five premises in George Town were inspected and three were ordered to close after inspectors conducting checks at the store for raw materials detected the smell of rat urine, leading to the discovery of rat droppings."

The council said the five premises were also served with Notice of Offences according to Section 47(1) of the Drainage and Building Act 1974 for not maintaining oil traps.

- Bernama



AKHBAR : THE SUN  
MUKA SURAT : 3  
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

## MEF slams Fomema over unilateral fees hike

■ BY JOSHUA PURUSHOTMAN  
[newsdesk@thesundaily.com](mailto:newsdesk@thesundaily.com)

**PETALING JAYA:** The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has lambasted Fomema Sdn Bhd for unilaterally increasing the fees for foreign worker medical examinations and their frequency without prior discussions with stakeholders.

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said: "MEF calls on the government to step in and discuss this matter with the relevant stakeholders. We also demand that Fomema immediately suspend the increase in fees and frequency of medical examinations.

"With about two million foreign workers in the country, employers have to fork out some RM414 million annually in fees for medical examinations," he said, adding that there has been no announcement by the government on the changes.

He said employers of foreign workers only learnt about the matter after visiting Fomema's website.

"On its website, Fomema announced that with effect from Dec 16, 2023, foreign workers will have to undergo a medical examination annually.

"Previously, they only had to have an annual medical examination for the first three years,

after which the next one would be seven years later.

"The medical examination requirement was subsequently changed to every alternate year. But now, Fomema has changed it again and is compelling foreign workers to have medical examinations every year they are in the country."

Syed Hussain said Fomema had also unilaterally increased its charges by between 10% and 14%.

He added that the increase in fees and frequency of medical examinations for foreign workers was decided and implemented solely by Fomema, which is the only company given the licence to conduct such

medical examinations.

He said before the announcement on the increase in fees, Fomema charged RM190 for male and RM207 for female workers, which covered screening for HIV, Hepatitis B, syphilis, pregnancy test and the presence of opiates and cannabis traces.

He said the fees have been increased to RM207 for male and RM217 for female workers, with the examinations including additional tests for filariasis (roundworm), Hepatitis C and methamphetamine abuse as required by the government.

Attempts to reach Fomema for comment were unsuccessful.